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SENATE BILL 648

By Burchett

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15, Chapter 2, relative to the designation of "John Sevier Day" as a day of special observance.

WHEREAS, John Sevier is a legendary figure in Tennessee's history; he was a renowned frontiersman, soldier and public servant, and he served with distinction as the first governor of the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1773, John Sevier moved his family westward across the Allegheny Mountains to a new settlement on the Holston River, and thus became one of the first white permanent settlers of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the next year he fought in Lord Dunmore's War (1773-1774), and during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), he was recognized as a hero for his valiant service in the victory over Loyalist forces in the Battle of King's Mountain (1780); and

WHEREAS, John Sevier was elected governor of the short-lived State of Franklin after the Revolutionary War; he subsequently served in the North Carolina Senate and as a U.S. Congressman representing North Carolina (1789-1791); and

WHEREAS, after North Carolina ceded its western territory to the federal government in 1790, John Sevier was a popular and astute leader among the settlers of the Territory South of the River Ohio; and

WHEREAS, when the territory was admitted into the Union as the State of Tennessee in 1796, John Sevier was elected as the new state's first governor; he adroitly served six terms and twelve years (1796-1801 and 1803-1809) during these formative years in Tennessee's history; and

WHEREAS, while governor, John Sevier negotiated with Indian tribes to secure additional lands for the new state and opened new roads into the area to encourage settlement; and

WHEREAS, at the close of his sixth term as governor, he was elected to the Tennessee Senate and subsequently served in the U. S. House of Representatives, this time as a Tennessean, from 1811 until his death in 1815; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that John Sevier departed this world while engaged in public service, the activity in which he had spent most of his adult life; he died while on a Congressional mission to Creek Indian country; and

WHEREAS, John Sevier participated in every phase of Tennessee's pioneer period, from the Watauga Association through statehood, as an able leader and stabilizing influence among his peers; and

WHEREAS, he was Tennessee's first hero, as well as its first governor; historians have noted that "No Tennessean during his lifetime surpassed him in popularity"; and

WHEREAS, this general assembly desires to designate June 23 as a day of special observance to commemorate John Sevier's singular role in Tennessee's history; now, therefore,  
**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:**

**SECTION 1.** Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 15, Chapter 2, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

June 23 of each year shall be observed as "John Sevier Day," to be proclaimed as such by the governor to honor and recognize John Sevier for his important role in Tennessee attaining statehood and his meritorious service as the State of Tennessee's first governor. Such day shall not be a legal holiday as defined in § 15-1-101.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.